

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-10 ISO-00 SR-02 VO-03 SCA-01

INSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

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R 311025Z MAY 75

FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2046

INFO AMEMBASY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 587

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, IZ, IR

SUBJECT: KURDISH REFUGEES

REF: STATE 115268

1. EVENTS IN IRAQI KURDISTAN SINCE THE MARCH 6 ALGIERS ACCORD HAVE NOT GONE AS MANY OBSERVERS ANTICIPATED. THE GOI, PROUD OF ITS MILITARY VICTORY, HAS DEMONSTRATED SURPRISING RESTRAINT TOWARD RETURNING KURDS. ALTHOUGH RESETTLEMENT OF KURDS WHO FLED IRAQ AT THE CLIMAX OF THE MARCH CONFLICT HAS NOT BEEN ACHIEVED ON A MASSIVE SCALE, SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS HAVE RETURNED. KURDS RE-CROSSING THE BORDER INTO IRAQ STILL CONTINUING ACCORDING TO A BELGIAN JOURNALIST WHO RETURNED FROM NORTH MAY 30. INDICATIONS ARE THAT COMPOSITION OF RETURNEES IS CHANGING FROM ONE OF ESSENTIALLY PEASANTS TO PARTLY PROFESSIONAL KURDS AND MEMBERS OF THE INTELLIGENTSIA; E.G. FORMER AT-TAAKHI EDITOR DAURA TAWFIQ HAS RETURNED

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AND IS LIVING QUIETLY IN BAGHDAD.

2. GOI APPEARS TO BE AVOIDING REPRISALS AGAINST THE RETURNEES. REPORTS FROM JOURNALISTS, WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES TEAM, AND TOHERS WHO HAVE VISITED NORTH INDICATE THAT ALTHOUGH THE IRAQ ARMY MAINTAINS MASSIVE MILITARY PRESENCE, KURDS ARE BEING ALLOWED TO PEACEFULLY RETURN TO THEIR HOMES. APPARENTLY MANY KURDS ARE WILLING TO CHANCE UNCERTAINTY RATHER THAN SUBMIT TO AN ALMOST CERTAIN FATE OF REFUGEE CAMPS AND SEVERE SOCIAL AND FAMILIAL DISLOCATION IN IRAN. PRESS REPORTS OF EXECUTIONS OF KURDS HAVE NOT BEEN CONFIRMED HERE AND APPEARS TO BE PART OF SYRIAN DIS-INFORMATION CAMPAIGN AGAINST IRAQ (BAGHDAD 561).

3. WITH RESPECT TO A USG ROLE IN A REFUGEE OR RESETTLEMENT EFFORT, USINT BELIEVES SUCH A MOVE WOULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE TO U.S. INTERESTS. IRAN HAS ASSURED THAT KURDS MAY REMAIN IN IRAN AND THEY ARE NOT THEREFORE HOMELESS. BOTH IRANIAN AND IRAQI POLICIES SUGGEST THAT LOCAL SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM APPEARS POSSIBLE AND DESIRABLE. FURTHERMORE, KURDS WHO GO TO U.S. WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY ATTEMPT TO KEEP KURDISH NATIONALIST MOVEMENT ALIVE AND ENGAGE IN ANTI-IRAQI AND POSSIBLY ANTI-TURKISH AND ANTI-IRANIAN PROPAGANDA THUS CAUSING A CONTINUING IRRITANT IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS.
LOWRIE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT, KURDS, EMIGRANTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BAGHDA00587
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750192-0048
From: BAGHDAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975051/aaaaaacp.tel
Line Count: 84
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ORM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 115268
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <03 JUN 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KURDISH REFUGEES
TAGS: SREF, IZ, IR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006